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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Research Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

Office of Administrator

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Staff Memorandum No. 6

Adjustments Required by Reduced Appropriations

All members of the staff are probably aware that the appropriations for this Office as provided in the 1952 Appropriation Act are substantially less than those available for the fiscal year 1951. The provisions of the Act also were such as to require that a substantial amount of this cut be taken from the allotment for personal services. Every effort has been made to apply these cuts in such a way as to maintain an effective work program and to keep a proper balance between the various units of the Office.

The purpose of this memorandum is to indicate what has been done and the implications of these actions on our operations.

By a combination of permitting vacancies to remain unfilled, transferring employees within the Office, and actually dropping some positions, a reduction has been made in the staffs of the Central Project, Information, and Business Offices. It will be necessary for these offices to conduct their operations with the reduced staffs and each of them will substantially have to look after its own workload without expecting help from other units. By the same token it will not be possible for these units to furnish help to the coordinating staff by assigning employees to that staff. These units will of course continue to serve the coordinating staff by performing their regular functions.

The coordinating staff itself has been reduced by leaving unfilled one coordinator vacancy and by dropping two members of the secretarial staff. The remaining staff will operate essentially on the basis of two secretaries for each group of three coordinators.

The staff assignments will be as follows:

Miss Orr will serve as secretary to Dr. Winters and will assist Mrs. Dixon in her work on RMA contracts and advisory committees.

Miss Hirdler and Mrs. Hitt will serve as secretaries to Dr. Joy, Mr. Cooper and Mr. True.

Mrs. Bybee and Miss Hughes will serve as secretaries to Dr. LeClerc, Dr. Magruder and Dr. Barnes.

Miss Brooks and Miss Carpenter will serve as secretaries to Dr. Fracker, Dr. Clarkson and Mr. Schoenhals.

Miss Ward, Mrs. Moore and Miss Thacker will serve as secretaries to Mr. Marston, Mr. Allgyer and Mr. Starkey. Since this group has an extra secretary it will also provide relief as needed to the other coordinating groups. The three secretaries will all be used in these relief assignments, which will be made by Mr. Starkey.

These assignments will involve a few changes in location, which will be made in the near future.

It is obvious that the new arrangement will be less satisfactory than the one under which each coordinator had his own secretary. Nevertheless, I believe that it is a workable arrangement if all of us keep the changed situation in mind and make necessary alterations in the practices which have been followed. Some of the areas which will need attention are as follows:

1. Careful work planning will be necessary. The coordinators and the secretaries within each group should develop the operating plan best suited to their needs, determine the best division of secretarial time, and as far as possible, the specific periods when each coordinator can count on stenographic and typing service.
2. Advisory committee meetings should be so scheduled as to make minimum demands on the secretaries within each group. If possible these meetings should be so staggered as to avoid two coordinators in the same group having consecutive meetings. This will permit time for the secretarial staff to handle the paper work incident to one advisory committee meeting within the group before another begins. Dr. Joy will take the lead in working out suitable meeting schedules.
3. Official trips and vacations should be scheduled in such a way as to provide maximum coverage of office assignments. Particularly in the matter of vacations it will be desirable to schedule them over a broader period than the summer months. Each unit will develop a vacation schedule and submit it to Mr. Spencer for coordination with those of other units.
4. In some cases coordinators serving as executive secretaries to advisory committees have had their secretaries take verbatim report of committee meetings. There seems to be some doubt as to whether these reports have been sufficiently valuable to pay for the time and labor involved. In any event it hardly seems possible to continue them with the reduced secretarial staff. It is of course anticipated that executive secretaries of committees may continue to have a secretary present at committee meetings to take down specific minutes or actions of the committee, but this work both during the meetings and in later transcription will involve a great deal less time and attention than verbatim reporting.
5. Each coordinating group should make a careful review of the files which it maintains. It is believed that the presence of much of this material in the Central Project Office and in the central files of the office will make it possible for coordinators to eliminate a considerable part of the material which they have been maintaining with a resultant decrease in the clerical work of their secretaries. In view of the availability of the Department Library, coordinators may also wish to consider whether it is justifiable to maintain their own subject-matter files of literature in their respective fields.

The above suggestions of course do not exhaust the subject. It is reasonable to suppose that staff members, having as they do a more detailed knowledge of their work than the Administrator can possibly have, will be able to determine

other methods which will help us in this time of manpower shortage. In addition to adopting such suggestions for its own operations it is requested that each unit report them for possible use in other units, since we are all faced with much the same problem. I have asked Mr. Spencer and Mr. Starkey to consider the applicability of all such suggestions and also to make a careful study of the operations and assignments throughout the Office of the Administrator in order to improve the effectiveness of our operation and enable us to make the best possible use of our resources.

B. T. Shaffer

Acting Administrator

